

SHAWNEE TRAILS

Shawnee Group, Sierra Club

March 2001

General Meeting

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The March General Meeting of the Shawnee Group will take place at the Unitarian Fellowship building, at **7:30 PM, on March 8, 2001.**

The Unitarian Fellowship is located at the corner of University Avenue and Elm Street, in Carbondale, Illinois.

This month's program will be presented by the **Ecowatch Staff**, with a slide show from Michael Jeffords on **wetlands.**

Hope to see you there!

Dinner Before Meeting

Join some of the Executive Committee, the speaker(s) for the evening's program, and other members for dinner at **Mugsy McGuire's** 1602 W. Main, at **5:45 p.m. on March 8**, before the meeting.

"We were a thousand feet up and a half a mile back from the river, but the jet skis resounded like chainsaws. We had escaped the city, braved the hot sun, and struggled against gravity, only to find ourselves trapped in somebody else's idea of fun." ...Charles Komanoff, Hiker

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Save Sugar Creek NOW!!!

Come to the Hearing!! March 12th, 7:00 PM

Marion High School

And, Write letters to the Governor!!!

Sugar Creek is the highest quality stream remaining in the Saline River drainage. It has been categorized as a "Highly Valued Aquatic Resource" by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), and is one of the less than 5% of streams remaining in Illinois capable of earning IDNR's "biologically significant" rating. Sugar Creek consists of a series of pools and riffles, which provides the highest quality habitat found in rivers and streams - habitat for a very diverse population of plants and animals, including a population of Indiana crayfish, a state endangered species, and the least brook lamprey, a state threatened species.

For more than ten years, local land owners and concerned Illinois citizens have fought to prevent this beautiful stream from being converted into a reservoir by the City of Marion for a new water supply. Even though there is an abundance of man-made lakes in Southern Illinois, this City steadfastly insists that it must have its own water supply, rather than purchasing water from other water suppliers in the region.

Some people may profit from development of lake front property on "Sugar Lake." However, the people of Illinois, the plants and animals in and around the creek, two state T & E species, and the water customers in the Rend Lake region would all be losers in the deal...and one more free flowing stream would be gone forever.

Construction of a reservoir on Sugar Creek cannot proceed until permits required by the Clean Water Act have been issued by both the Corps of Engineers and the Illinois EPA. The grossly inadequate environmental and economic studies that have been prepared for this proposal have resulted in two lawsuits, which forced the Louisville District to prepare "supplemental" studies. Your letters have helped greatly in fighting off this destructive project so far. Once again, your letters and comments are desperately needed to prevent the destruction of Sugar Creek. Please come to the public hearing on March 12th, and make comments if you can. Also, please write letters. The IEPA and the Louisville District are accepting comments on this proposal until March 26th. Governor Ryan also needs to hear from people who oppose this project. **Continued on P. 2**

What You Can Do

Attend the Public Hearing, March 12th at 7 PM and voice your opposition to this environmentally damaging and financially wasteful proposal. Marion High School, 1501 S. Carbon, 2 miles south of New Rt. 13 in Marion. Bring your family, friends and neighbors - all Sugar Creek advocates - to the hearing to help pack the hall! Need more information to help you make comments at the hearing? Call Barb McKasson (618) 529-4824 or Laurel Toussaint (618)964-1339.

In order to build the "Sugar Creek Dam & Reservoir", the City of Marion must receive permits under the federal Clean Water Act. The Army Corps of Engineers gives Section 404 permits to dredge and fill public waters, and EPA/ Illinois EPA gives Section 401 permits for discharge into public waters. These two agencies will be holding the public hearing on March 12th. We need YOU to come to the hearing - to show strong public opposition to damming yet another high quality stream.

PLEASE RESPOND TO THE ALERT THAT YOU WILL RECEIVE SOON!!!

We are sending out another special alert on Sugar Creek, because we need to generate as many letters as possible! When you get the alert, please do the following:

* Submit Comments to the Corps of Engineers - must be received by March 26th. Write to the Corps of Engineers and express your opposition to this unnecessary proposal.

** MOST IMPORTANTLY -We also need calls and letters to Governor Ryan, urging him to put the interests of the region and the state above the interests of a few people in Marion.

Look for the Special Mailing for details!

Audubon Invitation as Follow Up to our Previous Joint Outing to the Karst Region and Illinois Caverns

by Vicki Lang

The Southern Illinois Audubon Society (S.I.A.S.) extends an invitation to the Sierra Club on Friday 3/23/01 at 7:30 P. M. at the First United Methodist Church at 214 W. Main in Carbondale for their monthly program. This program compliments the recent November 19th joint outing arranged by Stan Harris to the Karst region and Illinois Caverns in Monroe County. **Philip Moss**, chairman of the Karst Conservancy of Illinois, Inc., will provide insight into how and why this organization is working to protect Karst in Illinois. Philip currently works as Senior Geologist in Southern Missouri. He started caving at a very early age, has discovered and mapped many caves and continues towards the preservation of caves and Karst. Join S.I.A.S. for an educational and inspiring slide program on 3/23/01 at 7:30 P.M. Hope to see you there.

Remembering Shawnee Sierran Ed Adams

By Laurel Toussaint

On February 8th Ed Adams died at his home in Carbondale with his wife, Lillian, and his daughter, Jane, at his bedside. Ed moved to southern Illinois in 1938 where he led a life of social and political activism, which included a commitment to preserve and protect the environment. Ed and his wife Lillian were early members of the Shawnee Group of the Sierra Club. Ed was Outings Chair for several years and led outings in the 1970's and 1980's. Many local residents are thankful to Ed for introducing them to the natural beauty of southern Illinois.

Shawnee Sierran, Bob Tyson, relates his memories of early Shawnee Group hikes with Ed:

"I have a vivid memory of him as monthly Outings Chair. We would meet at 10 AM in the bank parking lot and he would surprise us with the day's itinerary. What was important was that his guidance got us to places we would never have found on our own. If you think trailheads and signing are poor now, it was worse 20 years ago. We went to Lusk Creek, Clear Springs, Hutchins Creek, and Little Grand Canyon. Picture this guy in his seventies going up a steep switchback with no exertion, while able-bodied college kids brought up the rear of the line with their tongues dragging over their footprints!"

Ed's memorial service at the Unitarian Fellowship was rich with descriptions of his love of the natural world, their life on their farm near Ava, and exploring the country with his wife Lillian. Ed always shared his enthusiasm with each of us he encountered.

It is fitting that Memorial Contributions in Ed's honor can be made to the Unitarian Fellowship where the Shawnee Group has continued to meet for so many years. Ed and Lillian joined the Fellowship in 1957.

The planet is a better place because of Ed. We will miss him. Send contributions to:

Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship
300 W Elm
Carbondale, IL 62901

ANNUAL TROPICAL ADVENTURE TO TRINIDAD-TOBAGO

May 30 - June 6, 2001

This trip is for anyone interested in seeing breathtaking tropical evergreen rain forests, giant leatherback turtles, deciduous tropical forests, coral reefs, mangroves, and exquisite tropical birds.

Based at the world-renowned Asa Wright Nature Centre and Lodge, a 200 acre wildlife sanctuary in Trinidad's rainforested Northern range and at the charming Blue Waters Inn in Tobago, we will visit several unique natural areas throughout both islands. We will also have an opportunity to experience the unique culture of this island-nation through its food, music, and history. The trip will be led by **Nelda Hinckley**, Assistant Professor of Biology at John A. Logan College

The cost of the trip is \$1916 or \$1766 if 10 people participate. The price includes airfare, lodging, all meals and field trips with expert local guides. Students register for Biology 241, "Introduction to Tropical Ecology, Spring semester (3 hours credit). For more information call Nelda Hinckley at (618) 549-5588 or 549-7335, Ext. 323.

SIERRA CLUB GROUPS IN ILLINOIS TO EDUCATE LEGISLATORS ON WATER ISSUES IN LEGISLATIVE LOBBYING VISITS

by Barbara McKasson

The Illinois Chapter is focusing on four water issues in its lobbying visits this year. One of our crusades is to persuade the legislature to institute fees for water pollution (NPDES) permits - a "user fee" to make the polluters fund the permit program. Another is to make sure new sewer extensions won't pollute Illinois' finest streams. The third is to ask the state legislature to address the problems caused by the U.S. Supreme Court decision that in effect left half of our nation's wetlands unprotected and open to unregulated destruction from development. The fourth issue is to set up a state permitting system for significant withdrawals from ground or surface water sources. Shawnee Group representatives will be setting up some meetings with our legislators to talk about these issues.

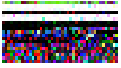
The State of Illinois needs to take a lesson from the 39 other states that charge a fee for water pollution permits. It costs Illinois taxpayers millions to process, enforce, and monitor compliance for the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits. Presently, there is no fee for the approximately 800 permits the Illinois EPA grants each year for polluters to discharge industrial wastewater, treated sewage, and other forms of pollution into Illinois' rivers, lakes, and streams. Issuing these licenses to pollute uses Illinois taxpayer dollars that should be spent cleaning up pollution instead! This spring, legislation will be introduced to establish a fair and equitable fee that dischargers must pay to receive an NPDES permit. The rate structure will be graduated, depending on amount and toxicity of the pollutants discharged. It is estimated that the fees would generate almost \$12 million annually for efforts to improve water quality, enhance wildlife habitat and fishing, and protect Illinois' waters from increased water pollution.

The Illinois Growth Task Force, legislators who want to improve land use planning in Illinois, are proposing legislation that would improve the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) permit evaluation process that determines whether or not a sewage treatment plant can extend its services into a new area. Expansion of sewage treatment facilities is a major factor in urban sprawl. We support a plan that will make sure the streams receiving sewage treatment plant wastes can handle that new pollution. We also support the Task Force recommendation that the process be consistent with local land use plans that may call for preservation of prime farm land, wetlands, or open space instead of urban sprawl.

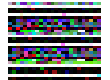
Tens of thousands of Illinois wetlands suddenly lost all protection in January when the U.S. Supreme Court dealt a heavy blow to the nation's wetlands protection program. The court ruled that the Army corps of Engineers lacks the authority to assert jurisdiction over isolated waters (not connected to navigable waters) based on their use by migratory birds. In Illinois we have already lost over 85% of our original wetland acreage. These areas protect our families from flood damage by absorbing rainwater, filter pollutants out of our water supplies, and provide critical habitat for many species of wildlife. Thanks to the U.S. Supreme Court, developers are already moving in to dredge and fill more wetlands. Sierra Club supports immediate legislation that would: a) require a permit from the state before isolated wetlands are destroyed, and b) offer financial incentives for landowners who wish to permanently protect wetlands.

Although Illinois has plentiful rainfall, studies by the Illinois State Water Survey indicate that we are approaching the limits of our water supplies in many areas. Chicago and suburbs are already using the maximum amount of water they are allowed to use from Lake Michigan under international treaties, and are pumping out aquifers as fast as they are being recharged. Many downstate communities are already in need of new water supplies. Urban sprawl and newly proposed natural gas power plants may use major amounts of water. To make sure all citizens have reliable water supplies, and to make sure that new withdrawals do not harm our rivers and streams and the wildlife that depends on them, the IL Chapter Sierra Club supports state legislation that would: a) require approval for any significant withdrawals from ground or surface water sources b) Protect natural conditions in rivers and streams by guaranteeing minimum flows c) Encourage water conservation in Illinois to ensure adequate supplies for future generations.

Sierra Club groups across the state will be educating our legislators on these issues this spring. Anyone who wants to help Shawnee Group educate our legislators on these issues may call Clara McClure at 457-2025.



SHAWNEE OUTINGS



Trip to Draper's bluff, Cedar Bluff and natural bridge nearby. Saturday, **March 17.** Meet at Murdale Shopping Center under the Murdale sign at 8 A. M. or at Lick Creek General Store at 8:45. Wear hiking boots, bring water and lunch. We will explore the scenic bluffs: Cedar bluff and Draper's bluff which lie between Lick Creek and Goreville and also a natural bridge in the vicinity. The hike will be led by Bob Tyson.

Other Outings

Jackson County Hiking Club **Hike at Camp Ondessonk, Saturday, March 3.** Meet at Murdale, 8 am, or Marion Dairy Queen on new route 13 at 8:45am. Non-members are welcome to join us. For more information call Sandy Anderson at 893-4545 or Judy Lewis at 529-5275.

Larue Pine Hills Day is Back--Mark your calendar for April 28. Field trips will be held throughout the day. Start time is 8 a. m. for wildflowers, swamp species, mammals, and ferns. More details later.

Jody Shimp will lead a hike on April 21st. Meet at Giant City Lodge Parking Lot at 9 A. M. This will be a follow up of the April 12th program on exotic, invasive species in Southern Illinois.

NATIONAL SIERRA CLUB OUTINGS

For those of you who receive the Sierra Club magazine, you may have noted an insert showing scheduled week long hikes and service projects across the United States. I sent for a brochure of one of the cheapest and closest ones. The one I chose is Mt. Rogers Wilderness, Southwest Virginia, which I can share with you. This is a Forest Service work camp repairing hiking trails from October 14 - 20. The cost is \$265, which includes meals, and an enclosed platform shelter (you still need a sleeping bag). There are a dining rooms, showers, bathrooms. There will be one day off during the week for hiking. I estimate the distance to be about 400 miles from Carbondale. The website is www.sierraclub.org/outings/national... submitted by BobTyson 684-5643.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE & FOLDING

Every month we get together to fold the newsletter for the newsletter mailing. We welcome all the help we can get. The deadline for the April newsletter will be March 25, with folding on March 29 at Don Lawrence's house at 5:30 PM. To check on directions call Don at 457-8989.

EXCOM MEETING

Our March ExCom meeting will be held on Thursday, March 15, 5:30 p.m. at Clara McClure's house. For directions call Clara at 457-2025.. Any member is welcome to attend.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SAVE PAPER AND RECEIVE THE NEWSLETTER BY E-MAIL?

Simply send a signed letter by regular mail or an e-mail message to <<donaldlaw@aol.com>> indicating that you would like to receive it by e-mail and I will put you on the e-mail list and take you off the regular mail list. Please give your name and regular PO address in your request.



Shawnee Group
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Shawnee Trails Newsletter Editor, Computer Committee, Marine Chair—Don Lawrence, 457-8989, donaldlaw@aol.com

Yes, I want to join! I want to safeguard our precious natural heritage. My payment is enclosed.

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Donations, gifts or dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include subscription to Sierra magazine(\$7.50) and your Chapter newsletter(\$1.00).

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